

GIANT-SIZE
DEFENDERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

2 OCT
02918

50¢

©

68 BIG PAGES

GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS™

NEW FEATURE-LENGTH
THRILLER!

FROM HELL
IT CAME—
TO SEEK OUT THE
SON OF SATAN!

PUS TWO MORE
SHOCK-SAGAS STARRING
DR. STRANGE
AND THE SAVAGE
SUB-MARINER!

GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

50¢

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!**

H... AS IN HULK... HELL... AND HOLOCAUST!

FIFTEEN SHORT MINUTES AGO, THE HULK WAS GOING HOME! (NOT THAT HE WAS LIKELY TO ACTUALLY FIND IT, MIND YOU, A WIZARD WITH COMPASS AND ROAD MAP, OLD GREENSKIN IS CERTAINLY NOT!) BUT STILL, THAT WAS HIS INTENTION.

HE'D PARTED COMPANY WITH HIS FELLOW DEFENDERS, HAVING SAVED THE UNITED NATIONS FROM MAGNETO AND HIS EVIL MUTANTS,* BUT THE MEMORY OF THAT EVENT HAS BEEN ERASED FROM HUMANITY'S COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS--

--WHICH IS REALLY MOST UNFORTUNATE!

FOR IF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE COULD RECALL THE GREEN GOLIATH'S HEROISM, PERHAPS THEY WOULD NOT SO READILY HAVE ATTACKED HIM, THINKING HIM ONLY A NEAR-MINDLESS MENACE.

PERHAPS-- BUT SOMEHOW WE DOUBT IT!

FOR CRIME'S SAKE-- WATCH OUT!

THE UGLY BRUTE IS GONNA THROW THAT THING!

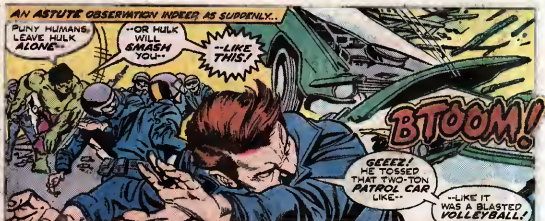
AND WE SHOULD KNOW, SINCE WE'RE:

LEN WEIN | GIL & KLAUS
WRITER | KANE & JANSON
ARTISTS

GLYNIS WEIN-COLORIST
DAVE HUNT-LETTERER

ROY THOMAS-EDITOR

*AS SHOWN IN THE DEFENDERS #16, STILL ON SALE IF YOU'RE LUCKY-- ROY



BUT, REMARKABLY, THE HEAVILY-ARMORED TANKS STAY TO THE REAR OF THE LINE--



--ALLOWING A SIMPLE TRAILER-TRUCK TO PULL TO A STOP FAR AHEAD--

--A SIMPLE TRAILER-TRUCK CARRYING A FAR-FROM-SIMPLE CARGO!

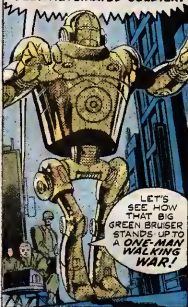


YOU READY, TONY?

READY AS I'LL EVER BE, I GUESS...

I'VE ACTIVATED THE MASTER COMMAND PANEL--

--WHICH SHOULD PUT ME IN COMPLETE REMOTE CONTROL OF THE MECHANOID-- AMERICA'S FIRST FULLY-AUTOMATED SOLDIER!



LET'S SEE HOW THAT BIG GREEN BRUISER STANDS UP TO A ONE-MAN WALKING WAR!

A FASCINATING QUESTION, OF COURSE, FIRST THAT BIG GREEN BRUISER HAS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'S UP AGAINST--



--AND THAT MAY TAKE SOME TIME!

HUH? WHAT DO PUNY HUMANS SEND AT HULK NOW?

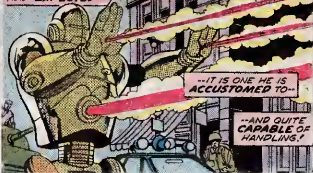
IS MACHINE-MAN ...ROBOT? WHAT DOES ROBOT WANT WITH HULK?



HULK ASKED ROBOT A QUESTION! WHAT DOES ROBOT WANT?

ANSWER HULK, ROBOT
--ANSWER HULK!

AN ANSWER COMES THEN FROM THE SILENT MACHINE --AND THOUGH IT IS NOT QUITE THE ANSWER THE HULK HAD EXPECTED--



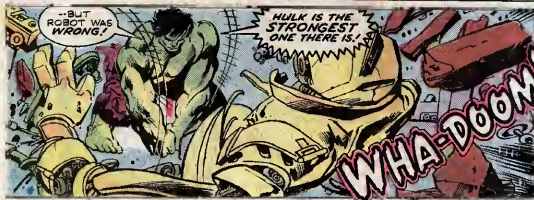
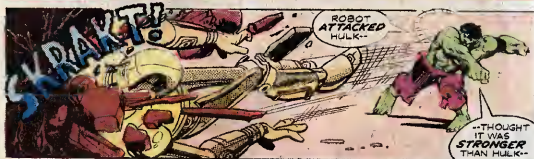
--IT IS ONE HE IS ACCUSTOMED TO--

--AND QUITE CAPABLE OF HANDLING!

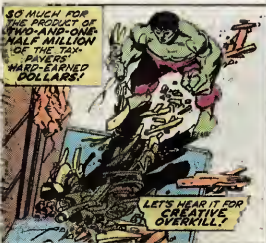
SO! ROBOT IS WEAPON! IT ATTACKS HULK--

--FIRES STRANGE ROCKETS AT HULK--





SO MUCH FOR
THE PRODUCT OF
TWO-AND-ONE-
HALF MILLION
OF THE TAX-
PAYERS'
HARD-EARNED
DOLLARS!



LET'S HEAR IT FOR
CREATIVE
OVERKILL!



MOTHER MARY!
HE TORE APART THAT
TITANIUM ROBOT LIKE IT
WAS TISSUE PAPER!

C'MON, YOU
GUYS! GET THE
HEAVY ARTILLERY
UP HERE--AND
MOVE IT!

AGAINST AN
ADVANCING
BATTALION, THAT
MIGHT BE AN IDEA
OF SOME MERIT--



--BUT AGAINST AN ENRAGED HULK,
IT'S MORE LIKE A FORM OF
INVOLUNTARY SUICIDE!

BAH!
HULK DOES NOT
WANT TO FIGHT
HUMANS!

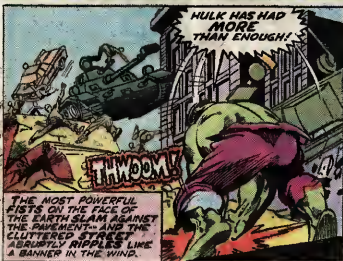
HULK ONLY
WANTS TO BE
LEFT ALONE!

BUT STILL SOLDIERS
ATTACK HULK--
AND STILL HULK
DOES NOT KNOW
WHY!



ALL HULK
DOES KNOW IS
THAT HULK HAS HAD
ENOUGH!

HULK HAS HAD
MORE
THAN ENOUGH!



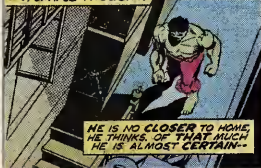
THE MOST POWERFUL
FISTS ON THE FACE OF
THE EARTH SLAM AGAINST
THE PAVEMENT--AND THE
CLUTTERED STREET
ABRUPTLY RIPPLES LIKE
A BANNER IN THE WIND.

THE MOST POWERFUL LEGS ON
THE FACE OF THE EARTH THEN
PROPEL THE GREEN BEHEMOTH
SKYWARD--



--AND WHEN THE STAGGERED
SOLDIERS AT LAST STUMBLE
TO THEIR FEET, THE INCREDIBLE
HULK IS VERY LONG GONE!

CUT: TO A SHADOWED ALLEYWAY A SHORT WHILE LATER. THE HULK HAS LONG SINCE ELUDED HIS PURSUERS, AND NOW HE SHAMBLES AIMLESSLY ALONG, LOST A SIMPLE THOUGHT.



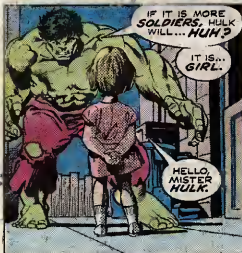
HE IS NO CLOSER TO HOME, HE THINKS. OF THAT MUCH HE IS ALMOST CERTAIN--

--AND HE MAY NEVER REACH THAT UNCERTAIN SANCTUARY FOR SUDDENLY--



YOO-HOO, MISTER HULK!

WHAT--? A VOICE BEHIND HULK--!



IF IT IS MORE SOLDIERS, HULK WILL... HUH?

IT IS... GIRL.

HELLO, MISTER HULK.

MY NAME IS LAURIE, MISTER HULK. I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU--

--AND I'VE COME A LONG WAY TO HELP YOU.



HUH? LITTLE GIRL WANTS TO HELP HULK?

OF COURSE I DO, MISTER HULK.

HERE. TAKE MY HAND --AND I'LL LEAD YOU TO SAFETY.

FOR A MOMENT, THE GREEN GOLIATH HESITATES --FOR THIS IS QUITE A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO HIM..



TOO FEW TIMES IN HIS HOUNDED, HARRIED LIFE HAS ANYONE OFFERED THEIR HAND TO HIM IN FRIENDSHIP--

--AND CERTAINLY NEVER ANYONE LIKE THIS.

NO ONE CAN SAY WHAT GOES THRU THE BEHEMOTH'S FEEBLE MIND AT SUCH A TENDER MOMENT--BUT AT LAST AN ALMOST-SMILE SPREADS ACROSS HIS BRUTISH FACE--



--AND THE CHILD'S HAND IS FILLED.

THEY TURN THEN, MOVING SOFTLY OFF INTO THE DARKNESS--



--AND THE SHADOWS SOON SWALLOW THEM WHOLE.

THE HULK DOES NOT QUESTION HIS GOLDEN-HAIRED GUIDE AS SHE LEADS HIM DOWN TWISTING AVENUES TOWARDS HIS UNKNOWN DESTINATION--

--FOR NOW, AT LEAST, HE HAS A DESTINATION!

HE FOLLOWS HER BLINDLY, OBEDIENTLY, INTO A WIND-BLOWN ALLEYWAY--

--DOWN A FLIGHT OF WELL-WORN STAIRS--

--THAT LEAD TO A MOST PECULIAR DOORWAY.

IT IS THEN THAT HE BEGINS TO QUESTION.

LITTLE GIRL, WHAT IS THIS UGLY PLACE?

THIS... IS HOME, MISTER HULK.

COME. LETS GO IN.

BUT ONCE INSIDE, ALL THE GREEN GOLIATH FINDS IS...

STAIRS! LOTS OF STAIRS!

WHERE DO LOTS OF STAIRS GO, LITTLE GIRL?

FOLLOW ME, MISTER HULK--AND I'LL SHOW YOU.

DOWN THE FIRST FLIGHT OF STAIRS, THE EMERALD BRUTE LUMBERS-- THEN DOWN ANOTHER--AND ANOTHER--AND YET ANOTHER AFTER THAT--

--EACH FLIGHT DARKER, DIRTIER, MORE HIDEOUS THAN THE ONE BEFORE--

--UNTIL, AFTER A SEEMINGLY INTERMINABLE TIME, THE MAN-BRUTE REACHES THE STAIRWAY'S END, TO DISCOVER...

THIS IS LITTLE GIRL'S HOME? LOOKS LIKE CAVE.

WHAT DOES LITTLE GIRL CALL HER HOME?

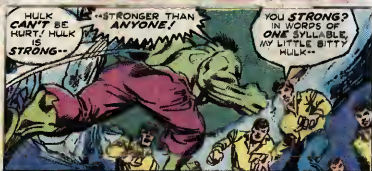
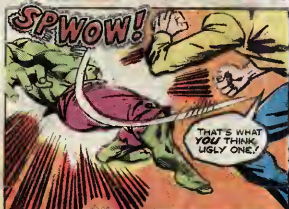
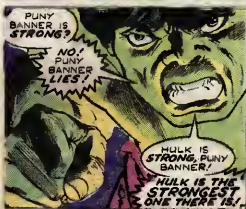
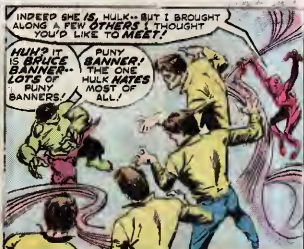
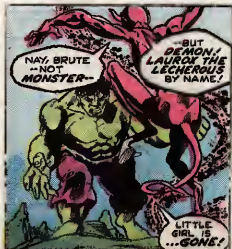
HULK SAID... WHAT DOES LITTLE GIRL CALL HER...

HUH?

WHAT DO I CALL MY HOME, YOU GARGANTUAN GREEN IGNORAMUS?

I CALL IT... HELL!

LITTLE GIRL IS CHANGING... INTO MONSTER!





LAUGHTER THAT IS
HEARD BY OTHERS
FAIRLY CLOSE BY--
YET IMPOSSIBLY
FAR AWAY--

...STRONGEST
ONE THERE IS!

--IN THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF THE MAN CALLED
DOCTOR STRANGE!

WE UNDER-
STAND
WHAT YOU HAVE
SHOWN US,
SPIRIT--

--BUT WE DO
NOT UNDERSTAND
YOUR PURPOSE!

WHY DO YOU
TORMENT
THE POOR HULK
SO?

I ASSURE
YOU, DEFENDERS--
THERE
IS INDEED
A PURPOSE
TO IT!

MY MASTER
WISHES YOU TO
SERVE HIM... IN A
MANNER YOU WOULD
NORMALLY FIND
MOST REPULSIVE...

...AND,
KNOWING THIS,
MY MASTER HAS
ARRANGED
MATTERS TO GIVE
YOU LITTLE
CHOICE...!

IF YOU CARE
AT ALL FOR YOUR
EMERALD COMPANION
...YOU WILL SOON SUBMIT
TO MY MASTER'S
DEMANDS...!

AND IF WE
DO NOT?

BUT YOU WILL
...FOR THE HULK'S
SIMPLE MIND CAN
NOT SURVIVE ITS
PLIGHT MUCH
LONGER WITHOUT
BEING IRREPARABLY
DESTROYED...

...AND IF THE
BEHEMOTH'S
BRAIN IS RUINED
...SO TOO WILL BE
THE BRILLIANT
MIND OF SCIENTIST
BRUCE
BANNER!

THINK
UPON THAT,
DEFENDERS... FOR
I WILL RETURN FOR
YOUR ANSWER...
SOON...!

HE'S GONE-- DISAPPEARED IN
THE PROVERBIAL PUFF
OF SMOKE!

"BLOWN
AWAY" IS THE
VERNACULAR
TERM FOR IT,
I BELIEVE.

WELL, NOT
EXACTLY,
DOCTOR--
BUT CLOSE
ENOUGH.

MY
ONLY QUESTION
IS: WHAT DO
WE DO NOW?

WE'LL NOT SUBMIT WITHOUT A
STRUGGLE, VALKYRIE, THAT
MUCH I ASSURE YOU.

THE HIDEOUS HOUSE
THEY LURED THE HULK INTO
IS OBVIOUSLY IN THIS
CITY.

I SUGGEST WE
BEGIN OUR COUNTER-
OFFENSIVE BY TRYING
TO FIND IT!

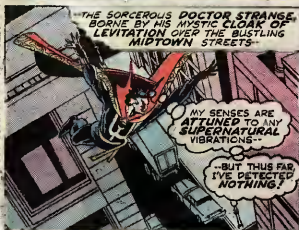


MOMENTS LATER, THREE BIZARRELY-COSTUMED FIGURES STREAK AWAY FROM THE FORBIDDING OLD TOWNHOUSE IN THE HEART OF GREENWICH VILLAGE--

--THE BLACK-AND-GOLD-GARBED NIGHTHAWK, JETTING SWIFTLY TO THE LOWER EAST SIDE--



NOT A BLASTED SIGN OF THAT UGLY PLACE--!



--THE SORCEROUS DOCTOR STRANGE, BORNE BY HIS MYSTIC CLOAK OF LEVITATION OVER THE BUSTLING MIDTOWN STREETS--

MY SENSES ARE ATTUNED TO ANY SUPERNATURAL VIBRATIONS--

--BUT THUS FAR I'VE DETECTED NOTHING!



--THE VIVACIOUS VALKYRIE, ASTRIDE HER WINGED HORSE ARAGORN, SOARING HIGH OVER HARLEM'S GRIMY GUTTERS AND ALLEYWAYS--

ONE WOULD THINK SUCH A HORRIBLE STRUCTURE WOULD STAND OUT GLARINGLY AND YET--



--BUT THE RESULT OF THEIR DESPERATE SEARCHING IS INEVITABLY THE SAME!

THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF THAT MYSTERIOUS BUILDING THOUGH WE ALL SAW IT IN MY MYSTIC CRYSTAL!

BUT WHEN THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS AT LAST REACHES HIS SOLEMN ABOPE...

I'D BEST RETURN TO MY SANCTUM--AND SEE HOW THE OTHERS HAVE FARED.



FROM THE LENGTH OF YOUR FACE, VALKYRIE --YOU WERE NO MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN I WAS.

WONDER HOW THE DOC MADE OUT?

NO BETTER, I'M AFRAID.

WE'D ALL BEST GO INSIDE --AND RE-EVALUATE THIS SITUATION, MY FRIENDS.

AND MOMENTS LATER...

YOU KNOW, DOC-- AN ANNOYING THOUGHT OCCURRED TO ME WHILE I WAS OUT HOUSE-HUNTING.

WHAT IF THIS THING IS A SHAM-- A HOAX?

I CONSIDERED THAT AS WELL, NIGHTHAWK-- BUT UNFORTUNATELY IT'S QUITE REAL!

I ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT THE HULK PSYCHICALLY WHILE I SCoured THE CITY--

THEN WE'RE BACK WHERE WE STARTED FROM, AREN'T WE?

--BUT I COULDN'T LOCATE HIM ANYWHERE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH!

THE HULK IS A PRISONER OF SOME GALLOPING LOONY-BIRD-- AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO HELP HIM!

NO, NIGHTHAWK, THERE ISN'T-- AT LEAST NOT FOR THE MOMENT.

BLAST IT! WHEN I THINK OF THE HELL THAT BIG GREEN 'CHILD' IS GOING THRU, I COULD...

NIGHTHAWK WAIT-- YOU'VE GIVEN ME AN IDEA!

YOU SPOKE OF HELL-- AND THERE'S A MAN THAT I HAVE HEARD OF WHO IS REPUTED TO BE AN EXPERT ON THE SUBJECT!

HIS NAME IS DAIMON HELLSTROM --AND PERHAPS HE'D BE WILLING TO HELP US!

HE'S LIVING NOW IN THE CITY OF SAINT LOUIS, I'M TOLD-- AND WE'VE NO TIME TO WASTE IN CONTACTING HIM.

SO STAND YOU BACK --WHILE I INVOKE THE MYSTIC TRANCE OF TRANSITION--

--AND DRAW UPON THE POWERS THAT FEW SAVE DOCTOR STRANGE CAN CONTROL!

HOLY HANNAH! LOOK AT HIS EYES!

AND NOW AN IMAGE IS RISING FROM HIS BODY--!

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS.

I'LL RETURN FROM SAINT LOUIS AS SWIFTLY AS I CAN--

--AND DAIMON HELLSTROM SHALL BE WITH ME!

SATANSPAWN!

**SAINT LOUIS,
MISSOURI-- A FEW
BRIEF SECONDS
LATER:**

**DAIMON
HELLSTROM**
--I HAVE NEED
OF YOUR
HELP!

THUS, AGAIN THE PLEA IS
VOICED--AND THIS TIME, AL-
MOST AS IF SENSING THE
PRESENCE IN THE ROOM
RATHER THAN HEARING
IT, DAIMON HELLSTROM
TURNS.

WHO--? OH,
**DOCTOR
STRANGE,**
ISN'T IT? I'VE
HEARD
OF YOU.

THEN PERHAPS
YOU'VE HEARD
THAT I RARELY
SPEAK LIGHTLY,
MY FRIEND.

I HAVE
NEED OF YOUR
ASSISTANCE.

MY ASSISTANCE? I'M
FLATTERED, I THINK--
BUT I'D BE DOING YOU
A DISSERVICE
WERE I TO
ACCEPT.

THERE IS FAR MORE TO ME
THAN YOU MIGHT EASILY
BELIEVE.

PERHAPS
--BUT
FRIEND OF
MINE LIES IN MORTAL
PERIL--

--AND
THERE IS
NOTHING
I WOULD
NOT RISK TO
SAVE HIM!

REGARDLESS OF THE
CONSEQUENCES,
DAIMON HELLSTROM,
I ASK YOU ONCE
AGAIN--

--WILL
YOU
HELP?

VERY WELL,
THEN, IF YOU
INSIST--

--BUT
REMEMBER,
YOU HAVE BEEN
WARNED.

THERE IS AN UNSPOKEN
URGENCY IN THE ALMOST
SPECTRAL WHISPER--BUT
THE NOTED EXORCIST-
DEMONOLOGIST SEEMS
NOT TO HEAR THE
MAGICIAN'S WORDS, SO
INTENT IS HE UPON
THE CRUMBLING VOLUME
THAT LIES BEFORE HIM.



NOW STAND AWAY,
STRANGE--AS I INVOKE
THE SIGN OF THE
TRIDENT--



--AND THUS SIGNAL
THE START OF--THE
TRANSFORMATION!



WITNESS, STRANGE-- AS MY
HUMAN FORM IS CONSUMED
BY THE SOUL-FIRE THAT
IS MY BIRTHRIGHT--



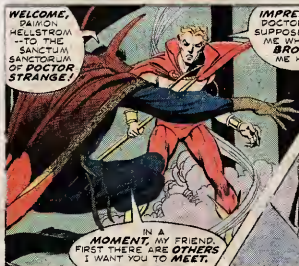
--ENVELOPED BY
ETHEREAL
FLAMES THAT
TRANSMUTE
DAIMON
HELLSTROM,
DEMONOLOGIST,
EX-STUDENT OF
DIVINITY, MAN BORN
OF MORTAL
WOMAN--



--INTO THE
HELL-SPAWNED
**SON OF
SATAN!**

SO--
THE WHISPERED
TALES I HAVE
HEARD ARE ALL
TRUE!

FEAR NOT,
HELLSTROM--YOUR
SECRETS ARE SAFE
WITH THE MASTER
OF THE MYSTIC
ARTS!



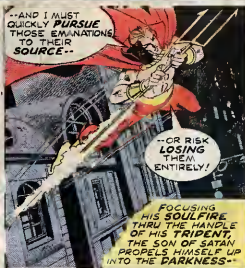
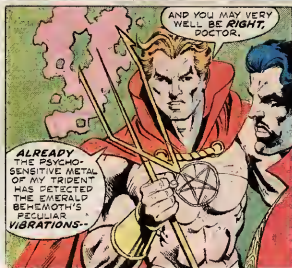
IMPRESSIVE, DOCTOR--BUT SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME WHY YOU'VE BROUGHT ME HERE?

AND WHEN THE SCION OF SATAN HAS BEEN PROPERLY INTRODUCED TO THE TWO REMAINING DEFENDERS...

--SO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW OUR PROBLEM, MY FRIEND.

WE'VE SCoured THE CITY MOST THOROUGHLY --YET HAVE FOUND NOT THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF THAT BUILDING, OR THE HULK.

WE HOPE THAT ONE WITH YOUR SPECIALIZED INTERESTS MIGHT HAVE BETTER LUCK.





--LEAVING BEHIND HIM THREE BEWILDERED DEFENDERS, WHO STAND STUNNED FOR A MOMENT BY HIS SUDDEN DEPARTURE--

--BUT FOR ONLY A MOMENT.

ACROSS THE CITY, THEY FOLLOW THE MAN CALLED HELLSTROM-- UNTIL, AT LAST, ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE...



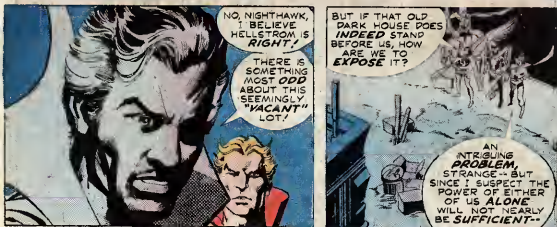
THERE IS THE PLACE YOU ARE LOOKING FOR, DEFENDERS!

THERE YOU WILL FIND THE HULK!

WHERE? HIDING UNDER A TIN CAN?

I CHECKED OUT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD MYSELF-- AND IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, CHUM--

--THIS LOT IS EMPTY!



NO, NIGHTHAWK, I BELIEVE HELLSTROM IS RIGHT!

THERE IS SOMETHING MOST ODD ABOUT THIS SEEMINGLY "VACANT" LOT!

BUT IF THAT OLD DARK HOUSE DOES INDEED STAND BEFORE US, HOW ARE WE TO EXPOSE IT?

AN INTRIGUING PROBLEM, STRANGE-- BUT SINCE I SUSPECT THE POWER OF EITHER OF US ALONE WILL NOT NEARLY BE SUFFICIENT--



--I SUGGEST THAT WE COMBINE OUR EFFORTS--

--CONCENTRATE OUR ENERGIES AS NEVER BEFORE--

--AND IF OUR POWERS ARE PROPERLY APPLIED--

"THE MOULDERING OLD MANSE WILL STAND REVEALED TO US!"

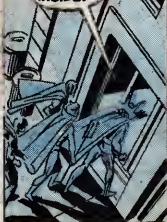


IT WAS AS WE SUSPECTED. A MYSTIC SPELL OF SOME SORT CONCEALED THE HOUSE FROM VIEW.



AND WHATEVER OTHER HORRORS THIS FORBIDDING OLD EDIFICE CONCEALS, WE SHALL SOON DISCOVER FOR OURSELVES.

COME, MY FRIENDS. IT IS TIME WE WENT INSIDE.



AND WHEN INSIDE, THE DEFENDERS DISCOVER ONLY...



THERE IS A STAIRCASE HERE FOR EACH OF US.

SHOUT IF YOU DISCOVER ANYTHING--



HE STEPS DOWN INTO DARKNESS, OUT OF SIGHT OF HIS COMPANIONS--



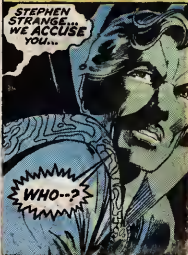
LIKE THE EMERALD BEHEMOTH BEFORE HIM, THE MYSTIC IMAGE TREADS ENDLESS FLIGHTS OF DUST-STREWN STAIRS--



--AND HE KNOWS NOT WHAT MAY AWAIT HIM WHEN HE FINDS THE STAIRWAY'S END.

BUT WHATEVER HE'D IMAGINED, IT WAS NOTHING QUITE LIKE-- THIS!

STEPHEN STRANGE... WE ACCUSE YOU...

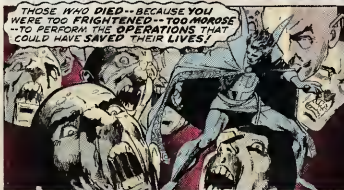




BY THE VISHANTI--
IT CANNOT
BE--!

SPECTERS...SPIRITS...
...GHOSTS FROM
OUT OF THE
PAST...!

AHE,
STEPHEN STRANGE--
GHOSTS OF THOSE
MANY WHO DIED
BECAUSE OF
YOU!

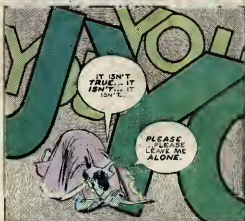


THOSE WHO DIED--BECAUSE YOU
WERE TOO FRIGHTENED--TOO MOROSE
--TO PERFORM THE OPERATIONS THAT
COULD HAVE SAVED THEIR LIVES!



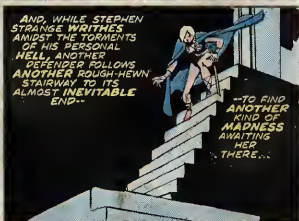
YOU,
STEPHEN STRANGE!
THRU YOUR
COWARDICE-- YOUR
CARELESSNESS--
YOU KILLED US
--KILLED US
ALL!

NO--
IT ISN'T
TRUE--!



IT ISN'T
TRUE... IT
ISN'T... IT
ISN'T...

PLEASE
PLEASE
LEAVE ME
ALONE.



AND, WHILE STEPHEN
STRANGE WRITHES
AMIDST THE TORMENTS
OF HIS PERSONAL
HELL, ANOTHER
DEFENDER FOLLOWS
ANOTHER ROUGH-HEWN
STAIRWAY TO ITS
ALMOST INEVITABLE
END--

--TO FIND
ANOTHER
KIND OF
MADNESS
AWAITING
HER
THERE...



FOR, AS THE VIBRANT VALKYRIE STEPS BOLDLY INTO THE
SHADOWS THAT LOOM BEFORE HER, SHE IS SUDDENLY
CONFRONTED BY...

VALKYRIE... YOU
ARE OURS...!

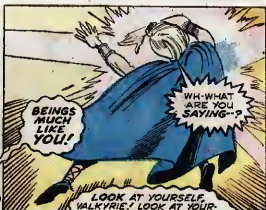
BY
VALHALLA!
AMAZON
GIANTESSES--

--AND
ALL OF THEM--
FACELESS!



YES, VALKYRIE--
FACELESS
ONES--

--BEINGS
WITHOUT PAST--
WITHOUT IDENTITY!



BEINGS
LIKE
YOU!

WH--WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING--?

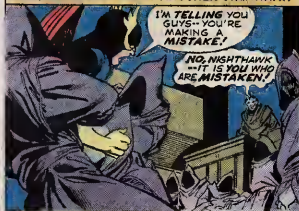
LOOK AT YOURSELF,
VALKYRIE! LOOK AT YOUR-
SELF--AND FACE THE TRUTH
--FOR YOU ARE AS WE ARE!



BENEATH
THE FACADE
OF THE
WOMAN
WARRIOR,
THERE IS
NO ONE--NO
ONE AT
ALL!

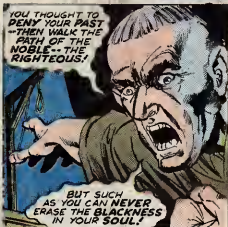
NO--NOOOO!

WHILE, AT THE FOOT OF YET ANOTHER STAIRWAY...



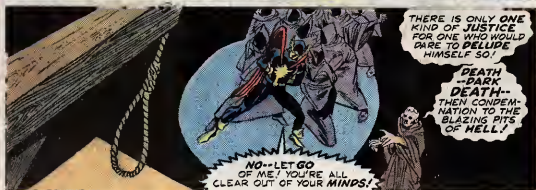
I'M TELLING YOU
GUYS-- YOU'RE
MAKING A
MISTAKE!

NO, NIGHTHAWK
--IT IS YOU WHO
ARE MISTAKEN!



YOU THOUGHT TO
DENY YOUR PAST
--THEN WALK THE
PATH OF THE
NOBLE-- THE
RIGHTEOUS!

BUT SUCH
AS YOU CAN NEVER
ERASE THE BLACKNESS
IN YOUR SOUL!



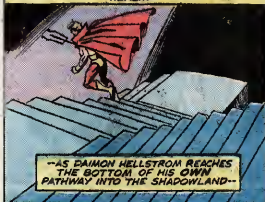
THERE IS ONLY ONE
KIND OF JUSTICE
FOR ONE WHO WOULD
DARE TO DELUDE
HIMSELF SO!

DEATH
--DARK
DEATH--

THEN CONDEMNATION TO THE
BLAZING PITS
OF HELL!

NO--LET GO
OF ME! YOU'RE ALL
CLEAR OUT OF YOUR MINDS!

AND WHEN SPEAKING OF HELL, WE'D BEST NOT FORGET THE HEIR TO THAT INFERNAL REALM--



--AS DAIMON HELLSTROM REACHES THE BOTTOM OF HIS OWN PATHWAY INTO THE SHADOWLAND--



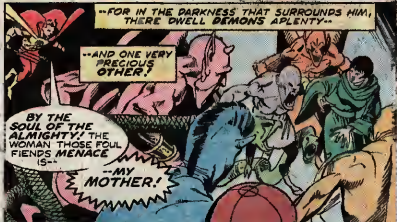
--TO DISCOVER--

BY THE SEVEN CIRCLES! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE--!

THE SON OF SATAN'S BLAZING EYES WIDEN IN AMAZEMENT, THEN NARROW IN GRIM RAGE--



--FOR IN THE DARKNESS THAT SURROUNDS HIM, THERE DWELL DEMONS APLENTY--



--AND ONE VERY PRECIOUS OTHER!

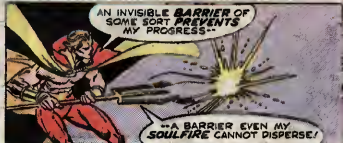
BY THE SOUL OF THE ALMIGHTY! THE WOMAN THOSE FOUL FIENDS MENACE IS--

--MY MOTHER!

BUT AS THE SCION OF THE NETHERWORLD STRAINS TO REACH HIS MOTHER'S SIDE...



HUH?



AN INVISIBLE BARRIER OF SOME SORT PREVENTS MY PROGRESS--

--A BARRIER EVEN MY SOULFIRE CANNOT DISPERSE!



DAIMON! DAIMON, MY SON --PLEASE-- HELP ME!!!

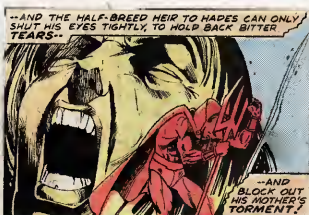
SHE NEEDS ME! SHE'S CALLING ME!

SOMEHOW, I MUST GET THROUGH!



LET ME
THROUGH,
CURSE YOU,
LET ME
THROUGH!

BUT STILL
THE BARRIER
HOLDS--



--AND THE HALF-BREED HEIR TO HADES CAN ONLY
SHUT HIS EYES TIGHTLY, TO HOLD BACK BITTER
TEARS--

--AND
BLOCK OUT
HIS MOTHER'S
TORMENT!



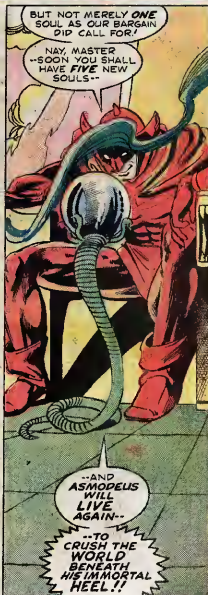
GO
AHEAD, YOU
FOOL! BATTER
YOURSELF
SENSELESS
IF YOU'D
LIKE--

--FOR I ASSURE
YOU THE BARRIER
WILL REMAIN
INVIOLEATE!



LOOK YOU,
MASTER--DO
YOU SEE HOW
WELL YOUR
FAITHFUL
ASMODEUS
SERVES YOU?

YOU DEMAND
NEW SOULS FOR
OLD--AND THIS
DO I SEEK TO
SUPPLY YOU!



BUT NOT MERELY ONE
SOUL AS OUR BARGAIN
DID CALL FOR!

NAY, MASTER
--SOON YOU SHALL
HAVE FIVE NEW
SOULS--

--AND
ASMODEUS
WILL
LIVE
AGAIN--

--TO
CRUSH THE
WORLD
BENEATH
HIS IMMORTAL
HEEL!!

CHAPTER
3

SOULGAME!

HELL: TO DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE, IT IS OVERWHELMING GUILT--

--AND THE HAUNTED FACES OF THOSE WHOSE DEATHS HE FEELS RESPONSIBLE FOR, THOSE HE MIGHT HAVE SAVED HAD HE NOT WALLOWED IN SELF-PITY--

*AS FIRST EXPLAINED WAY BACK IN STRANGE TALES #115, --ROY.

--BUT THOUGH SUCH GUILT MAY BEND THE MYSTIC MAGE, IT CANNOT BREAK HIM. OBSERVE:

THOSE TORTURED FACES THAT SURROUND ME--SO REAL, AND YET--!

I KNOW THEY ARE ONLY PHANTASMS --GIVEN SUBSTANCE BY MY SHAME!

BUT MY SHAME--MY GUILT IS SENSELESS NOW!

THE ACTIONS OF THE PAST CANNOT BE CHANGED-- ONLY TEMPERED BY THE ACTS OF THE FUTURE!

BY THE VISHANTI! --MY GUILT SHALL NOT DESTROY ME!

THUS, WHEN THE ACCUSING VOICES RISE ONCE MORE, THEY ARE ANGRILY DENIED!

ENOUGH, I SAY YOU-- ENOUGH!

I KNOW NOT WHAT YOU ARE, SPIRITS--BUT YOUR INTENTIONS ARE QUITE CLEAR!

YOU'VE DREGGED UP MEMORIES I'D HOPED I HAD FORGOTTEN--

--AND THAT I WILL NOT FORGIVE YOU!

FIRED BY RIGHTEOUS FURY, THE SORCERER SUPREME BATHES THE BENIGHTED CHAMBER IN THE MYSTIC ENERGIES FEW SAVE HE HAVE TAMED.

ENERGIES THAT QUICKLY REDUCE THE HOWLING, HAUNTED SPECTERS INTO SO MUCH SWIRLING SMOKE!

SMOKE THAT BLOWS WILDLY AWAY, CAUGHT UPON A BREATH OF HADES' BREEZE--

--LEAVING DOCTOR STRANGE TO STAND ALONE IN SILENT TRIUMPH--

--A MAN WHO HAS SUFFERED PURGATORY, YET EMERGED UNDAUNTED AND WHOLE!

HELL: TO THE VIBRANT VALKYRIE IT IS LACK OF IDENTITY--

--A NATURAL ENOUGH APPREHENSION FOR A WOMAN CREATED FULL GROWN, WITHOUT A PAST, THE PRODUCT OF THE ENCHANTRESS'S SORCERY.

AS REVEALED IN DEFENDERS #4. --ROY.

NO FACE...I HAVE NO FACE WHAT I'VE ALWAYS DREADED IS TRUE...

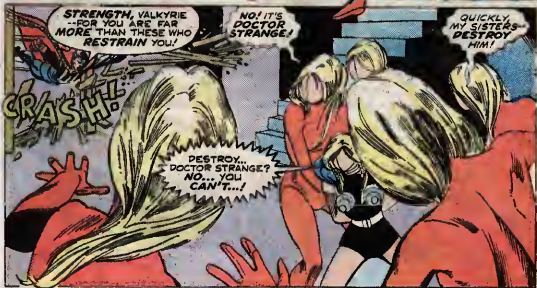
...I AM NOBODY... NOBODY...

STRENGTH, VALKYRIE --FOR YOU ARE FAR MORE THAN THESE WHO RESTRAIN YOU!

NO! IT'S DOCTOR STRANGE!

QUICKLY, MY SISTERS DESTROY HIM!

DESTROY... DOCTOR STRANGE? NO... YOU CAN'T...!



QUITE RIGHT, VALKYRIE--
FOR THE MASTER OF THE
MYSTIC ARTS IS NOT
EASILY DESTROYED!

NOT
EASILY
AT ALL!

FIGHT
ON, STEPHEN
--I'M WITH
YOU!

AND LIKE THE
GHOST-MEN BEFORE
THEM, THE GIANT AMAZONS
SOON BECOME SMOKE!

WELL MEY, VALKYRIE.
BETWEEN US,
WE'VE...

VAL? IS
SOMETHING
WRONG?

BUT YOU'RE WRONG,
VAL: YOU DO HAVE AN
IDENTITY--A VERY
SPECIAL IDENTITY!

YOU NEED NOT
HAVE A PAST TO BUILD
A THRIVING FUTURE. YOU
NEED ONLY HAVE COURAGE
--AND YOU HAVE THAT
IN ABUNDANCE.

PLEASE,
STEPHEN--
DON'T MOCK
ME! LOOK AT ME!
LOOK AT THIS
MIRROR!

I HAVE NO
FACE--NO
IDENTITY!

PLEASE,
VAL--LOOK
INTO THE
MIRROR--

--AND SEE YOURSELF AS YOU
WERE MEANT TO BE SEEN!

MY FACE-- IT'S
COME BACK--!

YOU NEVER
TRULY LOST YOUR
FACE, VAL--ONLY YOUR
CONFIDENCE.

THEN THAT IS SOMETHING I
SHALL NEVER LOSE AGAIN,
STEPHEN!

SKRASH!

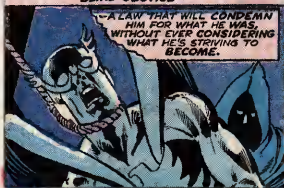
THANK
YOU.

BUT WHAT OF THE
OTHERS? IF THEY'VE
BEEN CONFRONTED
AS WE WERE...?

I TRUST
THEY'LL HAVE DEALT
WITH THE SITUATION
AS WE HAVE, VAL.

BUT, ON
THE CHANCE THAT THEY
HAVEN'T... WE'D BEST
FIND THEM TO BE SURE!

**HELL: TO THE MAN CALLED NIGHTHAWK, IT IS
BLIND JUSTICE--**



**A LAW THAT WOULD EXECUTE
HIM WITHOUT HESITATION, WERE
IT NOT FOR...**



**TREACHERY--BASE
TREACHERY!
OTHER FOUL VILLAINS
COME TO THE
NIGHTHAWK'S
AID!**



**YOU
DON'T SEE ME
COMPLAINING,
DO YOU?**

**WHAT
KEPT
YOU GUYS?**

**YOUR BONDS
ARE IMAGINARY,
NIGHTHAWK! THROW
OFF YOUR OPPRESSORS!**

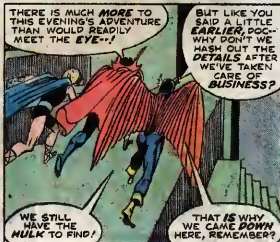
**THAT,
PRETTY
LADY,
IS THE BEST
IDEA I'VE
HEARD ALL
...HUH?**



AND AS BEFORE...

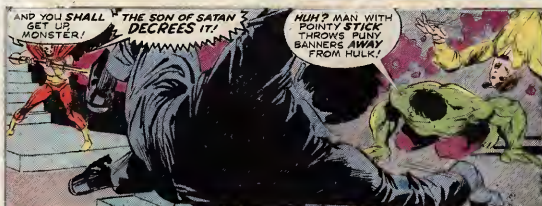
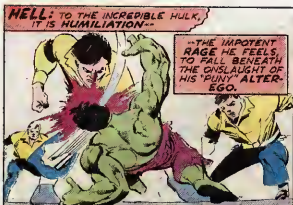


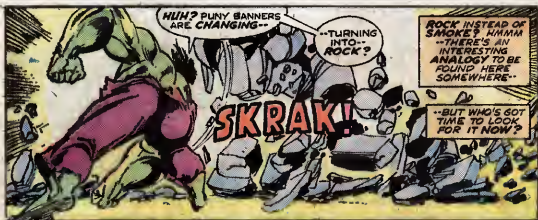
**THERE IS MUCH MORE TO
THIS EVENING'S ADVENTURE
THAN WOULD READILY
MEET THE EYE--!**



**WE STILL
HAVE THE
HULK TO FIND!**

**THAT IS WHY
WE CAME DOWN
HERE, REMEMBER?**





HUH? PUNY BANNERS
ARE CHANGING--

--TURNING
INTO--
ROCK?

ROCK INSTEAD OF
SMOKE? HUMMM
--THERE'S AN
INTERESTING
ANALOGY TO BE
FOUND HERE
SOMEWHERE--

--BUT WHO'S GOT
TIME TO LOOK
FOR IT NOW?

SKRAK!

WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO ATTEND TO.

LIKE LISTENING IN ON DAIMON
HELLSTROM'S EXPLANATION...

FOR A WHILE, I
TOO SUFFERED A
PERSONAL HELL
--AS I WITNESSED
MY MOTHER'S
TORMENT!

UNTIL, AT LAST,
I REALIZED I
DEALT WITH A
WORLD OF
ILLUSION--

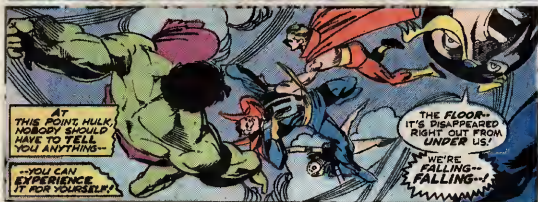
--AND THAT
REALIZATION
TURNED MY
MOTHER AND
HER TORMENTORS
INTO SMOKE
BEFORE MY EYES

AND SPEAKING OF SMOKE...

BY THE VAPORS
OF VALTORR!
THE ROOM DISSOLVES
INTO MIST
AROUND US!

WHAT IS
HAPPENING
HERE? SOME-
BODY TELL
HULK!

I KNEW THIS
PLACE WAS COMING
APART AT THE SEAMS
--BUT THIS IS
RIDICULOUS!

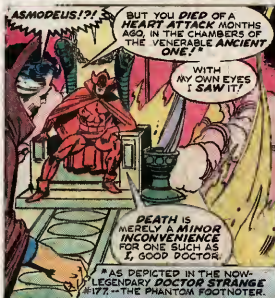


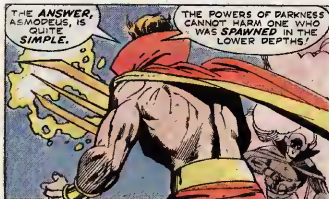
AT
THIS POINT, HULK,
NOBODY SHOULD
HAVE TO TELL
YOU ANYTHING--

--YOU CAN
EXPERIENCE
IT FOR YOURSELF!

THE FLOOR--
IT'S DISAPPEARED
RIGHT OUT FROM
UNDER US!

WE'RE
FALLING--
FALLING--!



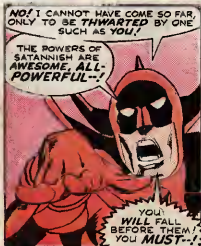


THE ANSWER, ASMODEUS, IS QUITE SIMPLE.

THE POWERS OF PARKNESS CANNOT HARM ONE WHO WAS SPAWNED IN THE LOWER DEPTHS!



SO LONG AS I GRASP THIS TRIDENT, FORGED OF NETHER METAL, YOUR POWERS^{ME} ARE QUITE USELESS AGAINST ME



NO! I CANNOT HAVE COME SO FAR, ONLY TO BE THWARTED BY ONE SUCH AS YOU!

THE POWERS OF SATANNISH ARE AWESOME, ALL-POWERFUL--!

YOU WILL FALL BEFORE THEM! YOU MUST--!



I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU ONCE, ASMODEUS: YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME--

--AND TIME IS THE ONE THING YOU DO NOT HAVE MUCH OF!

UUNNGH!



NOW I MUST CONCENTRATE-- ALLOW MY SOULFIRE TO COUNTERACT THE LETHAL ENERGIES THAT COURSE THROUGH THE DEFENDERS' BODIES BEFORE THEY...

...THANK HEAVEN--THEY STIR!

UUNNGH --WHY DOES HULK'S HEAD HURT?



FORGIVE ME, HULK--BUT IT WAS NECESSARY TO... EH?

THAT SOUND-- THE CLOCK ABOVE ASMODEUS' THRONE--

BNG!

BONG!

BONG!



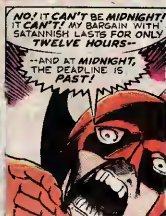
"IT'S TOLLING MIDNIGHT!"

BONG!

BONG!

BONG!

BONG!



NO! IT CAN'T BE MIDNIGHT! IT CAN'T! MY BARGAIN WITH SATANNISH LASTS FOR ONLY TWELVE HOURS--

--AND AT MIDNIGHT, THE DEADLINE IS PAST!

WITH THAT, THE THRONE-LOCK CRUMBLES--

--AS DOES THE EARTH BENEATH ASMOPEUS' FEET!

EARTH THAT CURLS BACK TO REVEAL--

MASTER! NO, MASTER-- PLEASE--!

I TRIED TO LIVE UP TO OUR BARGAIN! I DID THE BEST I COULD!

PLEASE, MASTER-- PLEEEEEASE!

"PLEASE, MASTER-- PLEASE!" NOT A VERY FITTING EPITAPH FOR A MAN WHO'S NOW DIED TWICE!

ASMOPEUS' SCREAMING STOPS--

--AS HE, THE HAND, AND THE CRACK IN THE EARTH ABRUPTLY DIS-APPEAR--

--FOLLOWED ALMOST INSTANTLY BY FIVE SILENT FIGURES--

--WHO REAPPEAR UPON A NEW YORK STREET, BESIDE A NOW TRULY-VACANT LOT.

IS IT ...OVER, STEPHEN?

YES, VAL-- IT'S OVER.

AND IN A WAY, DOCTOR STRANGE--IT IS A MOST IRONIC ENDING INDEED.

ASMOPEUS SOUGHT TO REGAIN HIS HUMANITY BY SACRIFICING OUR FIVE SOULS--

--BUT ANY BEING WHO WOULD COMMIT SUCH AN ACT COULD NEVER BE CALLED HUMAN!

HULK DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

FEW OF US DO, HULK.

DAIMON HELLSTROM, THE DEFENDERS THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

YOU'RE MOST WELCOME, DOCTOR.

YOU'VE GIVEN ME A CHANCE THIS NIGHT TO IN PART REPAY A DEBT--

--THOUGH THE DEBT OF VENGEANCE I OWE MY ACCURSED FATHER CAN NEVER BE REPAYED IN FULL!

NEXT ISSUE:
ANOTHER ALL NEW
30 PAGE SPECTACULAR
STARRING THE DYNAMIC
DEFENDERS AND THE MOST
UNEXPECTED GUEST-
STAR OF ALL!

SUB-MARINER

ART & STORY BY
BILL EVERETT

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED
IN YOUNG MEN #25

OFF-BEAT EPIC TIME! HERE'S A
TALE OF PRINCE NAMOR, SOME-
TIME DEFENDER, FROM THE
FABULOUS 1950'S, WHEN HE
WAS A WISE-CRACKING YOUTH
WITH CONSIDERABLY LESS SUPER-
STRENGTH... AND MINUS THOSE
NUTTY WINGS ON HIS FEET!
ENJOY, NOSTALGIA GUY!

PEOPLE JUMP - OR FALL - INTO WATER, AND DISAPPEAR... COMPLETELY!
BODIES ARE FOUND - HORRIBLY MUTILATED - ON WATERFRONT
DOCKS, AND WASHED UP ON BEACHES... AND THOUSANDS
OF GREAT WHITE SHARKS INVADE WATERS FOREIGN TO THEM!
THIS IS NOT RIGHT... THIS IS NOT NORMAL... THIS IS NOT NATURAL...
THEREFORE, THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR PRINCE NAMOR, THE

SUB-MARINER!

AT BATTERY PARK, ON THE LOWER TIP OF MANHATTAN, A
SMALL CROWD STANDS PATIENTLY WAITING FOR THE STATEN
ISLAND FERRY. SUDDENLY —

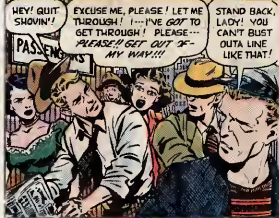
HEY! QUIT
SHOVIN'!

EXCUSE ME, PLEASE! LET ME
THROUGH! I---I'VE GOT TO
GET THROUGH! PLEASE...
PLEASE!! GET OUT OF
MY WAY!!!

STAND BACK,
LADY! YOU
CAN'T BUST
OUTA LINE
LIKE THAT!

GREAT HEAVENS! LOOK!
SHE'S DIVING RIGHT INTO
THE WATER! SOMEONE
STOP HER!

SHE'S TRYING TO
COMMIT SUICIDE!
GET A COP!!



SUMMONED BY THE SHOUTING CROWD, AN ALERT POLICEMAN INSTANTLY SHEDS HIS CAP AND SHOES, AND DIVES AFTER THE DESPERATE GIRL...



HIS HEAD APPEARS AGAIN AND AGAIN AS HE GASPS FOR AIR BEFORE EACH REPEATED DIVE... FINALLY HE RETURNS TO THE DOCK, EXHAUSTED...

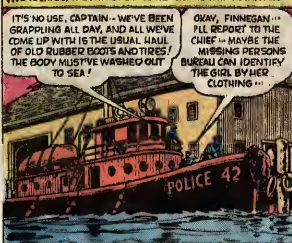


HER CLOTHES... (GASP)... THAT'S ALL I COULD FIND!

LISTEN, SERGEANT... SHE'S ~~NOT~~ TO BE DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE! THE TIDE COULDN'T HAVE CARRIED HER BODY OUT TO SEA THAT QUICKLY! GET THE HARBOR POLICE TO DRAG THE WHOLE AREA AROUND THE DOCK!



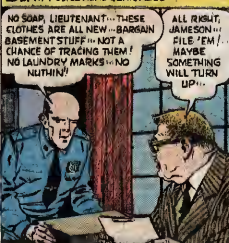
HOURS LATER, THE PATROL BOATS RETURN TO THEIR STATIONS...



IT'S NO USE, CAPTAIN... WE'VE BEEN GRAPPLING ALL DAY, AND ALL WE'VE COME UP WITH IS THE USUAL HAUL OF OLD RUBBER BOOTS AND TIRES! THE BODY MUST'VE WASHED OUT TO SEA!

OKAY, FINNEGAN... I'LL REPORT TO THE CHIEF... MAYBE THE MISSING PERSONS BUREAU CAN IDENTIFY THE GIRL BY HER CLOTHING...

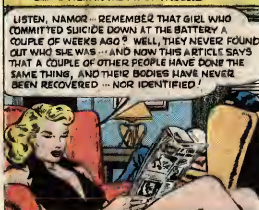
BUT AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...



NO SOAP, LIEUTENANT... THESE CLOTHES ARE ALL NEW... BARGAIN BASEMENT STUFF... NOT A CHANCE OF TRACING THEM! NO LAUNDRY MARKS... NO NUTHIN'!

ALL RIGHT, JAMESON... FILE 'EM... MAYBE SOMETHING WILL TURN UP...

WEEKS PASS, AND IN A SMALL APARTMENT ON THE FASHIONABLE EAST SIDE, BETTY DEAN, EX-POLICE-WOMAN, EX-NEWSPAPER REPORTER, READS A SMALL ITEM IN THE *DAILY TABLOID*...



LISTEN, NAMOR... REMEMBER THAT GIRL WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE DOWN AT THE BATTERY A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO? WELL, THEY NEVER FOUND OUT WHO SHE WAS... AND NOW THIS ARTICLE SAYS THAT A COUPLE OF OTHER PEOPLE HAVE DONE THE SAME THING, AND THEIR BODIES HAVE NEVER BEEN RECOVERED... NOR IDENTIFIED!

AND ~~ARMED~~ NAMOR, THE NOTORIOUS SUB-MARINER LOOKS PUZZLED...



THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, BETTY... THE NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT IS FAR MORE EFFICIENT THAN *THAT*! THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT THESE DISAPPEARANCES... MAYBE I'D BETTER LOOK INTO THEM, HUH?

VERY CAREFULLY, THAT NIGHT, NAMOR GOES TO THE SCENE OF THE LATEST DISAPPEARANCES, A DOCK ON THE NORTH RIVER...

OH-OH! WHAT'S THIS?

A BUM? A DRUNK? OR A -- SUFFERIN' SHAD!!! WHAT A GHASTLY MESS! THIS GUY'S BEEN CHEWED UP LIKE HE'D BEEN ATTACKED BY A -- A MAN-EATING SHARK!!

THE POLICE ARRIVE IN RESPONSE TO NAMOR'S HASTY PHONE CALL...

I DON'T GET IT, LIEUTENANT... THERE AREN'T ANY SHARKS IN THE RIVER HERE, AND THE VICTIM'S CLOTHES WEREN'T EVEN WET! HE HADN'T BEEN IN THE WATER, YET THE TEARS IN HIS FLESH WERE DEFINITELY MADE BY THE TEETH OF A SHARK!

COULDN'T IT HAVE HAPPENED A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO? MAYBE SOMEONE PICKED HIM UP IN A BOAT AND DUMPED HIS BODY HERE...

I DOUBT IT... THOSE WOUNDS ARE TOO FRESH! I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK DOWN BELOW!

JUST AS I THOUGHT... I WON'T FIND ANYTHING DOWN HERE! THIS WATER'S TOO COLD FOR SHARKS!

MEANWHILE, IN THE WARMER WATERS FARTHER SOUTH, A SMALL PLEASURE CRAFT SUDDENLY ROCKS CRAZILY AND CAPSIZES WITH A HORRIBLE CRASH!

AIEEEEEEE!!!

HELP!

HELP!

SOMETHING'S GOT MY LEGS!!!
YAAAARGH!!!

YI-EEEE!!
MY FOOT... IT'S GONE!
OWRRR
MOOP

LATER, WHEN A COAST GUARD PATROL BOAT PICKS UP THE WRECKAGE...

HEY, BO'S'N, WHADDYA S'POSE KICKED THIS TUB OVER? THERE AIN'T A SCRATCH ON THE HULL, AN' THERE WASN'T NO STORM OUT HERE LAST NIGHT!

Y'GOT ME, MATE! THERE DON'T SEEM TO BE NO SURVIVORS, NEITHER! WELL, LET'S TOW 'ER ASHORE, LADS!



MR. MARKHAM, SIR, HERE'S A RADIOGRAM FROM THE SHORE STATION, SAYIN' THERE'S BEEN SOME BODIES WASHED UP ON A BEACH NEAR WHERE THIS BOAT TURNED OVER... COMMANDER SMITH THINKS THEY MAY BE THE SURVIVORS...

VERY GOOD, NICHOLS... WE'LL HAVE A LOOK AT THEM!



BY ARRANGEMENT, THE SUB-MARINER MEETS HIS FRIEND, LT. COMDR. MARKHAM, ON THE DESIGNATED BEACH.

TERRIBLE SIGHT, ISN'T IT, NAMOR? THE BOAT MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE MIDDLE OF A WHOLE SCHOOL OF SHARKS WHEN IT CAPSIZED!

IT'S PRETTY GHASTLY, BEN-- AND UNCANNY, TOO! THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON FOR THAT BOAT TO OVERTURN!



UNLESS THE SHARKS WERE EXCEEDINGLY HUNGRY.

EH, MISTER? UNLESS THEY WERE SO CLOSE TO STARVING TO DEATH-- SO DESPERATE-- THAT THEY LITERALLY SHAMMED THE BOAT IN THEIR QUEST FOR FOOD... FOR RICH HUMAN FLESH!

RIDICULOUS, MAN! NO SHARK HAS THAT MUCH INTELLIGENCE YOU TALK LIKE A LUNATIC-- WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?



BUT WITH A TAUNTING LAUGH THE STRANGE MAN VANISHES INTO THE CROWD... AND LATER THAT NIGHT, ON THE SAME BEACH...

THIS WHOLE DEAL IS SCREWY! THERE'S SOMETHING UNNATURAL ABOUT THESE SHARK ATTACKS!



HELLO--? THERE'S THAT NUTTY CHARACTER THAT WAS HERE THIS MORNING! WHAT'S HE DOING HERE AGAIN TONIGHT?



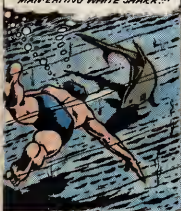
GOING FOR A SWIM! THIS IS NO PUBLIC BATHING BEACH! HE MUST BE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING IN THE SURF-- MAYBE I'D BETTER FOLLOW HIM!



GREAT GAW! HE'S VANISHED IN THE SURF! THE SILLY FOOL WILL DROWN! I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!!!



NOT A SIGN OF HIM ANYWHERE... NOTHING BUT THAT BIG FISH OVER THERE... THAT---OH!! IT'S A MAN-EATING WHITE SHARK!!



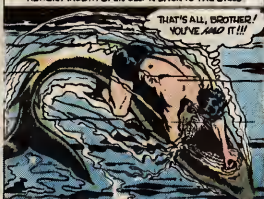
HOLY HALIBUT! THE CARNIVOROUS BRUTE'S GLARING AT ME LIKE I WAS HIS DEADLIEST ENEMY! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE POOR FISH?



OH! HE WANTS TO PLAY GAMES, DOES HE? OKAY, MAC... YOU WANNA DANCE WITH THE SUB-MARINER, YOU GOTTA PAY THE PIPER... AND THAT'S ME!!! COME ON, BOY... I'LL WALTZ AROUND WITH YOU!



THE SAVAGE FISH MAKES A VICIOUS PASS AT THE INDOMITABLE SUB-MARINER, ROLLING ON HIS BACK TO SNAP HIS SPRING-LIKE JAWS... BUT NAMOR'S STRONG HANDS WRENCH HIS HEAD BACK, SPLITTING THE RED, HUNGRY MOUTH OPEN CLEAR BACK TO THE GILLS!



THAT'S ALL, BROTHER! YOU'VE HAD IT!!!

AND THE FOLLOWING MORNING AN EARLY SWIMMER DISCOVERS THE BODY OF THE STRANGE MAN OF NAMOR'S BRIEF ACQUAINTANCE CAST UP ON THE CLEAR WHITE SANDS...

GOOD LORD! HIS FACE IS SPLIT WIDE OPEN---HIS JAWS RIPPED APART COMPLETELY! WHAT CAUSED IT?

UHM!! I DON'T THINK I'D WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT IT, OFFICER...



I'M BEGINNING TO GET THE GLIMMER OF AN IDEA ABOUT THIS WHOLE GRUESOME BUSINESS! RIGHT NOW THIS CASE BEFORE YOU LOOKS LIKE HOMICIDE--- SOMEONE *KILLED* THAT MAN---BUT BEFORE I'M THROUGH---WELL---GO AHEAD AND REPORT IT AS A SUSPECTED MURDER!



ONCE MORE NIGHT FALLS... AND AGAIN WE FIND NAMOR ON THE BEACH, LOOKING SEAWARD...

WE COULD SET A TRAP FOR THEM HERE... WE COULD LURE THEM IN...



HEY! WHO'S *THAT*? THERE WASN'T ANYONE SWIMMING HERE A MOMENT AGO! THAT GIRL... WADING OUT OF THE SURF... *WHERE DID SHE COME FROM?*



OH... HELLO! YOU STARTLED ME! I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE WAS ON THE BEACH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT, MISTER?



WHY, I DON'T *WANT* ANYTHING, MISS... IT'S JUST THAT I'VE GOT A THEORY ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY MAN-KILLING SHARKS IN THESE WATERS... AND I THINK I'VE FIGURED OUT A WAY TO SET A TRAP TO *EXTERMINATE* THEM ALL!

OH, NO! YOU CAN'T DO *THAT* --! I -- I MEAN --

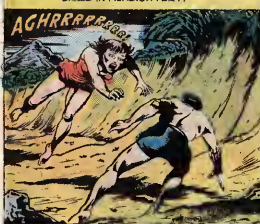


WHY NOT, MISS? THESE VICIOUS CREATURES ARE *MAN-EATING MONSTERS!!* AND YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK? I THINK THEY'RE PART *HUMAN!!!* FOR ALL I KNOW, YOU MAY BE ONE OF THEM!

WHY, YOU -- !!!



WITH A SAVAGE SNARL, THE AMAZONIAN GIRL LUNGES AT THE SUB-MARINER, HER STRANGELY POINTED TEETH BARED IN FIENDISH FURY!



A MOMENT LATER SHE IS HELPLESS IN NAMOR'S ARMS, 'FLOPPING LIKE A BEACHED FISH!'

SO! I WAS RIGHT! FISH DON'T LIVE LONG OUT OF WATER, SWEETHEART, SO YOU'D BETTER TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, OR I'LL KEEP YOU ON DRY LAND TILL YOU SHRIVEL UP LIKE A DRIED HERRING!

NO! NO! I'LL TELL YOU! LET ME UP!



IT'S NO USE! I TOLD THEM IT WOULDN'T WORK... BUT THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN! WE... WE'RE ACTUALLY A RACE OF WATER-PEOPLE FROM ANOTHER PLANET, MISTER, AND WE DISCOVERED HOW TO PROJECT OURSELVES MENTALLY ACROSS SPACE TO EARTH! BUT OUR MINDS HAD TO HAVE *BODIES* TO LIVE HERE... SO WE SELECTED THE MOST FEARSOME OF ALL SEA-MONSTERS... *THE GREAT WHITE SHARK!!*



THEN WE LEARNED HOW TO TRANSFORM OURSELVES INTO *HUMAN* SHAPES... BUT EVEN THOUGH WE *LOOK* LIKE HUMANS, WE STILL HAVE TO EAT *LIVE FLESH*, AND WE HAVE TO RETURN TO WATER ONCE EACH DAY, OR WE DIE LIKE ANY OTHER ORDINARY FISH!



THE MINUTE WE SUBMERGE OURSELVES, WE TURN INTO SHARKS AGAIN... THAT'S WHY YOU COULDN'T FIND ANY OF THOSE "PEOPLE" WHO DISAPPEARED! THAT'S WHY YOU KILLED THAT "MAN" LAST NIGHT!



SO... HE WASN'T A MAN AT ALL! JUST WHAT I THOUGHT! WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS BUSINESS? DO YOU SHARK-PEOPLE HOPE TO CONQUER THE EARTH, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE FROM OUTER SPACE SEEMS TO?



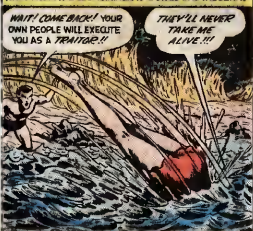
YES... BUT I *TOLD* THEM IT WOULDN'T WORK! THEY'RE ALL MASSING FOR A FINAL BRIEFING TOMORROW OFF CAPE HATTERAS...

THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION, SWEETHEART! WE'LL ARRANGE A NICE LITTLE SURPRISE FOR THEM! NOW, SINCE NO ONE WILL BELIEVE SUCH A FANTASTIC STORY, I'M TAKING YOU WITH ME TO *PROVE* IT!



NO! *NO!* IF I HAVE TO DIE, LET ME DIE IN THE SEA... NOT ON DRY LAND! *LET ME GO!!!*

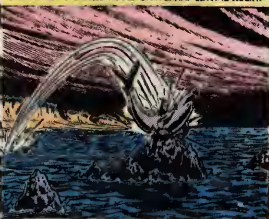
WITH A VIOLENT TWIST, THE STRANGE CREATURE LEAPS AWAY FROM THE SUB-MARINER AND DIVES INTO THE SURF!!



WAIT! COME BACK! YOUR OWN PEOPLE WILL EXECUTE YOU AS A *TRAITOR*!!

THEY'LL NEVER TAKE ME ALIVE!!!

AND MOMENTS LATER THERE IS A SILVER FLASH ON THE BREAKERS, AND A GREAT WHITE SHARK KNIFES OUT OF THE WATER TO IMPALE ITSELF ON A SHARP JUTTING ROCK!!



THE FOLLOWING DAY, A SMALL FLEET OF SPECIALLY-EQUIPPED FISHING BOATS, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SUB MARINER AND LT. COMDR. BEN MARKHAM, HEADS FOR CAPE HATTERAS...

IF I DON'T KNOW YOU BETTER, NAMOR, I'D SAY THIS IS THE CRAZIEST THING I EVER HEARD OF!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE IT, BEN... JUST BE SURE MY PLAN IS CARRIED OUT!



WITHIN A MATTER OF HOURS THE FLEET REACHES ITS DESTINATION...

THERE THEY ARE, SIR!! THERE MUST BE THOUSANDS OF THEM! DO WE DROP THE NETS NOW?

YES! BE SURE THEY'RE ALL LINKED TOGETHER, AND DRAW THEM IN A TIGHT CIRCLE AROUND THE ENTIRE SCHOOL!!!



SO A CORDON OF STEEL NETTING IS DRAWN IN A CIRCLE AROUND THE THRASHING SHARKS, AND ABRUPTLY ONE OF THEM LEAPS INTO THE AIR, CHANGING MAGICALLY INTO HALF-MAN, HALF-FISH!!!

WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO US???

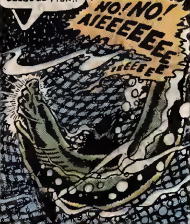


WE'VE GOT YOU TRAPPED, MISTER SPACE-SHARK! YOU'VE GOT YOUR CHOICE... EITHER PROJECT YOUR MENTALITIES BACK TO THE PLANET YOU CAME FROM, OR BE HAULED UP ON DRYLAND TO DIE UNDER THE HOT SUN!!!

NO! NO! WE CAN'T GO BACK! WE CAN'T!!



THEN SUFFER THE FATE OF ALL WOULD-BE "CONQUERORS OF EARTH," YOU POOR DELUDED FISH!!



AS EVENING FALLS, THE MOON RISES OVER AN AWESOME SCENE... A MILE-LONG BEACH COMPLETELY COVERED WITH THE CORPSES OF THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF GREAT WHITE SHARKS-- ALL VERY, VERY DEAD!!!

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT, NAMOR! THEY DIED WITHOUT EVEN PUTTING UP A FIGHT!

EVEN NORMAL SHARKS ARE NATURAL COWARDS, BEN, AND THESE INVADERS FROM SPACE WERE NO EXCEPTION!!!



AND A DAY LATER, IN NEW YORK CITY, BETTY DEAN RECEIVES A SHORT NOTE...

2.
Horrible end. So my suspicions were confirmed, and my actions justified. These monsters had to exist on human flesh, whether on land or in water, and it was the sight of that victim on the deck that gave me my first clue. No one will ever know if the "mentalities" of these beasts were projected back into space, or if they just died -- but no one would believe it anyway! So -- that's the end of the "Man-Eating Monsters"!!!
Years - SM
THE END

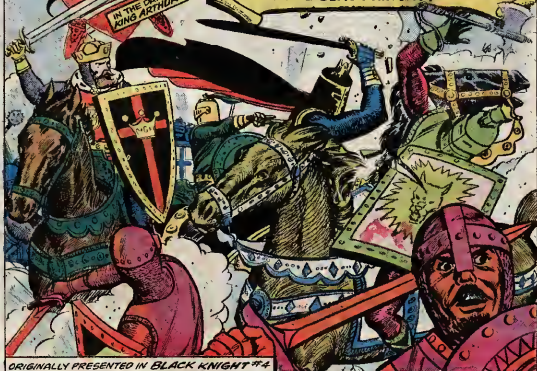
Black Knight

IN THE DAYS OF
KING ARTHUR

A SPECIAL GUEST-FEATURE STARRING
A DIFFERENT KIND OF DEFENDER!

PLEA HAD COME TO KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON, TO SMASH SIR GUY WANDERELL AND HIS FORCES, FOR HE WAS ATTACKING AND PLUNDERING LESSER BARDNIES AND DEVASTATING THE COUNTRYSIDE! THEN DID THE KING RALLY HIS KNIGHTS AND MEN-AT-ARMS AND ATTACK CASTLE WANDERELL! NEVER DID HE DREAM THAT THIS ACT WOULD LEAD TO BETRAYAL AND THE OUTLAWING OF THE MOST VALIANT NOBLE OF THEM ALL...

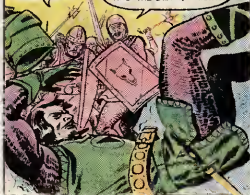
THE BLACK KNIGHT!



ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN **BLACK KNIGHT #4**

SIR GUY HAS
FALLEN!

RETREAT! ALL IS LOST! THE
FIELD BELONGS TO THE KING
AND THE BLACK KNIGHT!



ONCE AGAIN THOU HAST
SAVED ME! EVER DOES THE
DEBT I OWE YOU GROW
GREATER, SIR BLACK
KNIGHT!

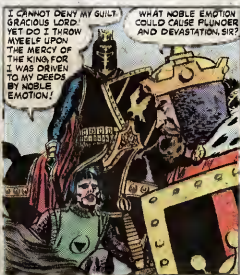
NAY, THE DEBT IS MINE, MY LORD!
NO GREATER PRIVILEGE COULD
BE GRANTED ANY MAN THAN
TO RIDE HERE AT ARTHUR'S
RIGHT HAND!





TRUCE!
TRUCE!

SO BE IT! SIR GUY WANDERELL, HOW DO
YOU PLEAD TO THE ACCUSATIONS OF
PLUNDER AGAINST THY NEIGHBORS?



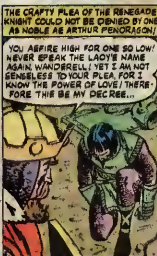
I CANNOT DENY MY GUILT.
GRACIOUS LORD!
YET DO I THROW
MYSELF UPON
THE MERCY OF
THE KING, FOR
I WAS DRIVEN
TO MY DEEDS
BY NOBLE
EMOTION!

WHAT NOBLE EMOTION
COULD CAUSE PLUNDER
AND DEVASTATION, SIR?



I FELL IN LOVE WITH THY WARD,
THE LADY ROEAMUND! MINE IS
A SMALL BARONY...SO, DRIVEN
BY MY LOVE, I ATTEMPTED TO
ACQUIRE GREATER HOLDINGS
AND FILL MY COFFERS WITH
GOLD TO LAY AT THE GRACIOUS
LADY'S FEET!

TIS AN
INSULT
TO HEAR
HER FAIR
NAME ON
SUCH
BASE
LIPS!



THE CRAFTY PLEA OF THE RENEGADE
KNIGHT COULD NOT BE DENIED BY ONE
AS NOBLE AS ARTHUR PENORAGON!

YOU ASPIRE HIGH FOR ONE SO LOW!
NEVER SPEAK THE LADY'S NAME
AGAIN, WANDERELL! YET I AM NOT
SENSELESS TO YOUR PLEA, FOR I
KNOW THE POWER OF LOVE! THERE-
FORE THIS BE MY DECREE...

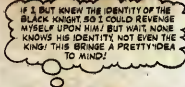


KEEP WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THINE
OWN LAND AND NEVER AGAIN COVET
THAT WHICH IS ANOTHER'S! SHOULD YOU
EVER AGAIN OVERTHROW THE BOUNDS
OF THESE COMMANDS, I SHALL COME
IN FORCE AND BRING YOU TO THE
DUNGEONS OF CAMELOT IN CHAINS!

SO THE JUST KING, HIS KNIGHTS AND MEN-AT-ARMS, QUITTED CASTLE WANDERELL,
VICTORIOUS!



WERE IT NOT FOR THE BLACK KNIGHT, I SHOULD HAVE
FELLED THE KING! LUCKILY I THOUGHT OF THAT
EXCUSE! LOVE, BAH! WHAT I WANT IS POWER!
STILL, MARRIAGE TO LADY ROSAMUND WOULD
GIVE ME THAT POWER, FOR SHE HAS LARGE
HOLDINGS!



IF I BUT KNEW THE IDENTITY OF THE
BLACK KNIGHT, SO I COULD REVENGE
MYSELF UPON HIM! BUT WAIT, NONE
KNOWS HIS IDENTITY, NOT EVEN THE
KING! THIS BRINGS A PRETTY IDEA
TO MIND!





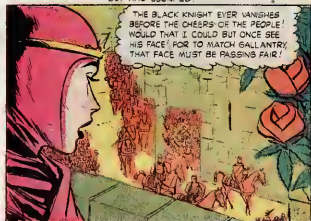
ARMORER, FASHION ME A SUIT OF ARMOR, THIS! MAKE ALSO A BLACK SWORD: THE ARMOR TOO MUST BE BLACK... BLACK AS THE RAVEN!



ERE NIGHT HAS FALLEN; ANOTHER BLACK KNIGHT SHALL RIDE, AND THE REPUTATION OF THE **TRUE** BLACK KNIGHT WHO FOILED ME THIS DAY, SHALL BE BLACKENED TO MATCH HIS ARMOR!

AT CAMELOT, VICTORIOUS ARTHUR ROODE INTO THE CASTLE TO THE CHEERS OF THE CASTLE PERSONNEL AND THE KNIGHTS WHOSE PROPERTY SIR GUY HAD USURPED:

WHILE THE TUMULT IN THE COURTYARD CONTINUED THE BLACK KNIGHT RAN THROUGH A SECRET PASSAGE OF THE ANCIENT CASTLE...

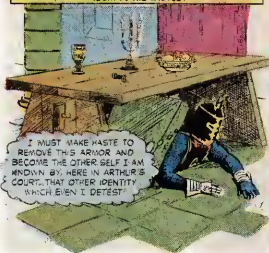


THE BLACK KNIGHT EVER VANISHES BEFORE THE CHEERS: OF THE PEOPLE! WOULD THAT I COULD BUT ONCE SEE HIS FACE! FOR TO MATCH GALLANTRY, THAT FACE MUST BE PASSING FAIR!



...AND EMERGED THROUGH A HIDDEN TRAP DOOR INTO A ROOM IN THE CASTLE!

THE EBONY ARMOR AND MIGHTY SWORD OF THE BLACK KNIGHT SECURELY HIDDEN. THE WEAKLING, SIR PERCY OF SCANDIA, STEPPED LANGUOLY THROUGH THE DOOR OF THAT ROOM OF DOUBLE IDENTITY...

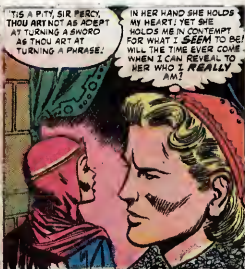


I MUST MAKE HASTE TO REMOVE THIS ARMOR AND BECOME THE OTHER SELF I AM KNOWN BY, HERE IN ARTHUR'S COURT, THAT OTHER IDENTITY WHICH EVEN I DETEST!



SUCH EMOTIONALISM OVER THE RETURNING WARRIORS! WHY SHOULD THEY NOT RESERVE THEIR HUZZAHS FOR SOMETHING OF TRUE MEANING... SUCH AS MY ODES AND MADRIGALS!

THE PEOPLE PREFER GALLANTRY TO POETRY, AND COURAGE TO COWARDICE... AS DO I!



IT'S A PITY, SIR PERCY, THOU ART NOT AS ADEPT AT TURNING A SWORD AS THOU ART AT TURNING A PHRASE!

IN HER HAND SHE HOLDS MY HEART! YET SHE HOLDS ME IN CONTEMPT FOR WHAT I SEEM TO BE! WILL THE TIME EVER COME WHEN I CAN REVEAL TO HER WHO I REALLY AM!



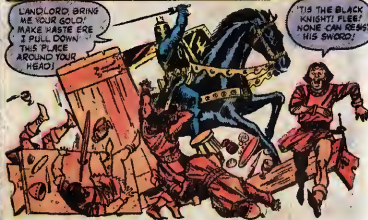
MY LORD KING! MY CARAVAN OF GOODS AND GOLD WAS ATTACKED BY THE BLACK KNIGHT AND ALL LOST!

THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE!



NOW WHAT IS THIS? WHO USES MY IDENTITY FOR MISCHIEF...AND WHY?

BUT AS THE DAYS PASSED, MURMURS AROSE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE! THE BLACK KNIGHT STRUCK AGAIN! AND SUCH WAS HIS REPUTATION, THAT RESISTANCE TO HIS SWORD WAS BUT HALF-HEARTED!



LANDLORD, BRING ME YOUR GOLD! MAKE HASTE HERE I PULL DOWN THIS PLACE AROUND YOUR HEAD!

'TIS THE BLACK KNIGHT! FLEE! NONE CAN RESIST HIS SWORD!

AND AS THE CRIMES PROGRESSED THE PEOPLE PRESSED THEIR KING TO DECLARE THE BLACK KNIGHT OUTLAWED! SO IN THE GREAT ARENA WHERE THE TOURNAMENT OF ROSES WAS TO BE HELD...

...AND THOUGH I CANNOT UNDERSTAND THIS CHANGE IN ONE OF MY PEOPLE BY WHOM THESE DRE DEEDS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED, I DO HEREBY DECLARE THE BLACK KNIGHT OUTLAWED!



THE TRUMPETS BLEARED TO THE CHEERING OF THE CROWD! THE TOURNAMENT OF ROSES, THAT THRILLING PAGEANT OF CHIVALRY, BEGAN!

SIRE, I CANNOT BELIEVE THIS OF SO NOBLE A KNIGHT! SOMEHOW THE BLACK KNIGHT HAS BEEN BETRAYED!

WOULD THAT MY GOOD MERLIN WERE HERE TO COUNSEL ME! BUT HE GROWS OLD AND IS AT THE HOT SPRINGS TO THE SOUTH TO EASE THE PAIN IN HIS JOINTS, WHICH EVEN HIS MAGIC CANNOT DISPEL!



AS THE TRUMPETS DIED AWAY SIR WANDERELL, IN HIDING NEAR THE FIELD, MADE READY FOR THE LAST ACT IN HIS DRAMA OF TREACHERY!

THE BLACK KNIGHT WILL APPEAR TO PLEAD BEFORE THE KING! AND I SHALL CLAIM TO BE THE **TRUE** BLACK KNIGHT WHOSE CHIVALRY IS LEGEND, AND ACCUSE HIM AS BEING IMPOSTOR AND CRIMINAL!



I SHALL AGITATE THE BOWMEN TO STRIKE HIM DOWN! ONCE HE IS DEAD WHO IS THERE THEN TO DISPUTE MY CLAIM TO THE LADY ROSAMUND'S HAND AND HER FORTUNE?



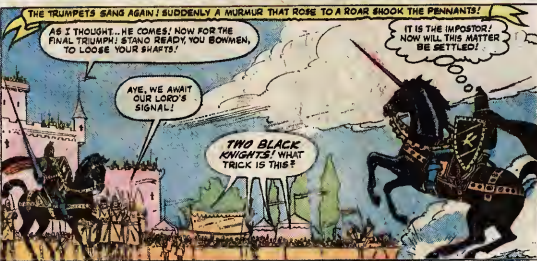
THE TRUMPETS SANG AGAIN! SUDDENLY A MURMUR THAT ROSE TO A ROAR SHOOK THE PENNANTS!

AS I THOUGHT... HE COMES! NOW FOR THE FINAL TRIUMPH! STAND READY, YOU BOWMEN, TO LOOSE YOUR SHAFTS!

AYE, WE AWAIT OUR LORD'S SIGNAL!

TWO BLACK KNIGHTS! WHAT TRICK IS THIS?

IT IS THE IMPOSTOR! NOW WILL THIS MATTER BE SETTLED!



THEN THE DECEITFUL GIR GUY RAISED HIS VOICE...

THERE STANDS THE CRIMINAL IMPOSTOR WHO HAS BESMIRCHED MY NAME! I AM THE **TRUE** BLACK KNIGHT, THY RIGHT ARM, OH MIGHTY MONARCH!

HE LIES! I DEMAND TRIAL BY LANCE AND SWORD AGAINST THIS VIPER WHO MASQUERADES AS ME! THUS WILL THE QUESTION BE SETTLED!



BOWMEN, LOOSE THY SHAFTS!

HOLD! THIS CONFUSION CAN ONLY BE SETTLED BY COMBAT! COUGH YOUR LANCES, TRUE KNIGHT AND IMPOSTOR, AND HAVE AT IT!

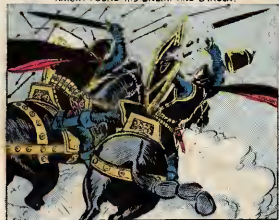


HOOPS THUNDERED IN THE SUDDEN SILENCE! LANCE
MET SHIELD IN SPLINTERING SHOCK...

I AM UNDONE!
THE BOWMEN...



THE SHAFTS WERE LOOSED, TO CLANG AGAINST THE IMPENETRABLE
BLACK ARMOR AND THUD TO THE FIELD! UNSCATHED, THE BLACK
KNIGHT FOUND HIS ENEMY AND STRUCK!



THE EBONY SWORD OF INVINCIBILITY CAN BE HELD ONLY BY
THE **TRUE** BLACK KNIGHT AND **NOT** THE IMPOSTOR WHO
HAS USED HIS IDENTITY FOR EVIL. THIS
SHALL PROVE WHICH IS WHICH,
KING ARTHUR!

NAY! I
REPLISE
SWORDPLAY
WITH THIS CRIMINAL!
BOWMEN, TO YOUR
TASK!

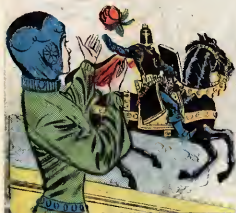


HERE IS THE OUTLAW,
THE IMPOSTOR WITH
HEART BLACKER
THAN THE ARMOR
HE WEARS... **SIR
GUY WANDERELL!**

HE SHALL HAVE HIS JUST
DESSERTS! AS TO YOU, **SIR
BLACK KNIGHT**, MY HEART
IS WITH YOU IN THIS MOMENT
OF YOUR REDEMPTION
AND TRIUMPH!



WHEN THERE IS NEED OF ME, I SHALL RETURN!
FOR YOU, MY LADY, MY HEART GOES WITH THIS
ROSE, PENDRAGON FOREVER!



THAT EVENING AT THE GREAT FEAST, ALL SPOKE OF THAT STRANGE
ENCOUNTER ON THE FIELD OF THE TOURNAMENT! ALL LISTENED TO
THE FOPPISSH SIR PERCY RECITE HIS ODE TO THE EVENT AND ALL
APPLAUDED... ALL BUT LADY ROSAMUND!

I FIND NOTHING TO APPLAUD IN THESE SPOUTINGS! YOU MAKE
MOCKERY OF A GREAT AND NOBLE KNIGHT! IF HE WERE HERE,
YOU WOULD NOT DARE!

AH ME, WOULD THAT
WE WERE ME AND ME.
HE... FOR THE SAKE OF
YOUR REGARD, SWEET
LADY!



DOCTOR STRANGE

DARES TO GO...

BEYOND The PURPLE VEIL!

GET SET FOR ONE OF THE MOST SPINE-TINGLING CHILLERS OF ALL FROM THE SIZZLING SIXTIES! AUTHOR KEN (ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST) KESSEY LOVED IT! JOURNALIST TOM WOLFE IMMORTALIZED IT IN HIS BOOK, THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST! AND, TRUTH TO TELL, A FEW ZILLION OTHER MARVELITES DIDN'T THINK IT WAS TOO BAD, EITHER!

SO PREPARE THYSELF,
SOCEROUS ONE, TO
ENTER THE DREAD
DOMAIN OF...
AGGAMON!!

STORY
CONJURED UP
BY:
STAN LEE

ILLUSTRATED BY THE
STRANGE SORCERY OF!
STEVE DITKO

LETTERED AT MIDNIGHT
BY:
ART SIMEK

WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS, ONE MAN REMAINS AWAKE--WEARY--EXHAUSTED--BUT USING EVERY OUNCE OF WILL-POWER AT HIS COMMAND TO FIGHT FALLING ASLEEP, UNTIL HIS WORK IS DONE!



CAN'T STOP NOW-- NOT TILL I LEARN ALL THE SECRETS OF THIS SINISTER GEM!



THOUGH IT LOOKS THE SAME, AS MANY LARGE VALUABLE GEMS, THIS OBJECT WHICH I HOLD IN MY HAND IS FAR DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER FOUND ON EARTH! FAR, FAR DIFFERENT!

MEANWHILE, IN THE NEXT ROOM, UNAWARE OF THE IDENTITY OF THEIR INTENDED VICTIM, TWO PETTY BURGLARS SILENTLY STEAL INTO DOCTOR STRANGE'S LIVING QUARTERS THRU AN OPEN STREET WINDOW...

WE'RE IN LUCK! THE WINDOW WAS OPEN-- NOBODY SAW US!

YEAH! THIS PLACE OUGHTTA BE A CINCINCH TO ROB! LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND...



BUT, SILENT THOUGH THEY ARE, THEY ARE NOT NEARLY SILENT ENOUGH FOR HIGHLY TRAINED SENSES OF DR. STRANGE!

I THOUGHT I SENSED SOMEONE MOVING IN THE NEXT ROOM! OH-- IT IS JUST TWO CLUMSY BURGLARS!

HUH? WHA--?



YOU CANNOT MOVE! YOU ARE TRANSFIXED TO THE SPOT! YOU--
BAH! NO--I WITHDRAW THOSE COMMANDS!

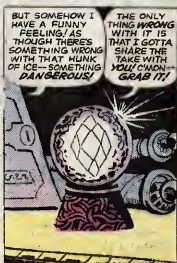
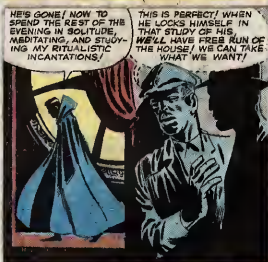
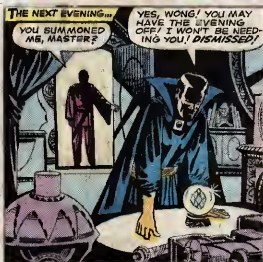
YOU ARE NOT WORTHY OF MY TIME OR TALENTS! I SHALL DISPOSE OF YOU IN THE QUICKEST MANNER!



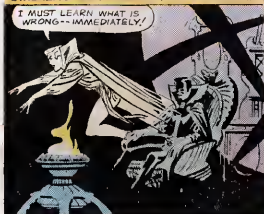
HEY--WHAT GOES ON HERE? HE MUMBLED A FEW NUTTY WORDS, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN WE'RE FLOATIN' THRU THE AIR!

SO, THIS PLACE OUGHTTA BE A CINCINCH TO ROB, HUH? NEXT TIME KEEP YOUR BIG MOUTH SHUT!





JUST THEN, IN AN ADJACENT ROOM, THE INSCRUTABLE DR. STRANGE SENSES THAT A TERRIBLE DANGER IS NEAR! IN THAT SPLIT SECOND, HE SENDS HIS **ETHEREAL FORM** FORWARD, TO INVESTIGATE...



THE GEM! IT'S GONE! WHO COULD HAVE BEEN FOOL ENOUGH TO TAKE SO DANGEROUS AN OBJECT?

NO MATTER! MY ENCHANTED AMULET WILL FIND HIM, NO MATTER WHERE HE MAY BE-- IF IT ISN'T TOO LATE!!



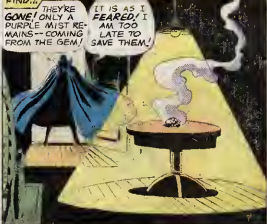
BY THE BEARDS OF THE **VISHANTI!!!** IT IS THE TWO THIEVES I ROUTED YESTERDAY! THE FOOLS! THEY DON'T REALIZE WHAT THEY'RE HANDLING!



LATER, IN HIS NORMAL PHYSICAL FORM ONCE MORE, THE MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC RACES TO THE HIDE-OUT, WHICH HIS AMULET LEADS HIM TO, ONLY TO FIND...

THEY'RE GONE! ONLY A PURPLE MIST REMAINS-- COMING FROM THE GEM!

IT IS AS I FEARED! I AM TOO LATE TO SAVE THEM!



HOW COULD THEY HAVE KNOWN THAT THE GEM WAS MERELY A DEVICE TO BRIDGE **DIMENSIONS**? IT WAS A MEANS TO ENTER THE DREAD **PURPLE DIMENSION**-- FROM OUR OWN WORLD!



EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE ENEMIES OF SOCIETY, MY OATH PROVIDES THAT I MUST AID ANY AND ALL HUMANS-- I DARE MAKE NO EXCEPTIONS! SO, I MUST GO AFTER THEM--!!



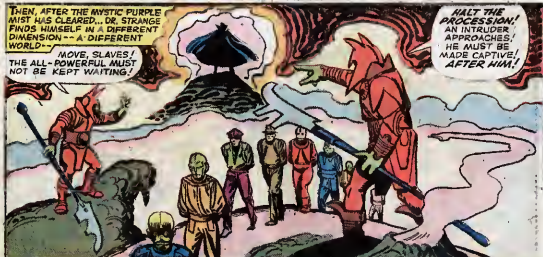
BY THE POWER OF MORMAMMU, LET ME ENTER THE **PURPLE DIMENSION**--NO MATTER WHAT THE DANGER!



THEN, AFTER THE MYSTIC PURPLE MIST HAS CLEARED... DR. STRANGE FINDS HIMSELF IN A DIFFERENT DIMENSION -- A DIFFERENT WORLD --

MOVE, SLAVES! THE ALL-POWERFUL MUST NOT BE KEPT WAITING!

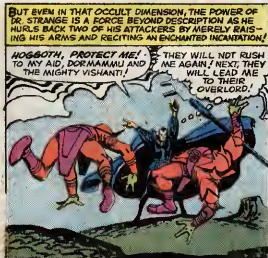
HALT THE PROCESSION! AN INTRUDER APPROACHES! HE MUST BE MADE CAPTIVE! AFTER HIM!



BUT EVEN IN THAT OCCULT DIMENSION, THE POWER OF DR. STRANGE IS A FORCE BEYOND DESCRIPTION AS HE HURLS BACK TWO OF HIS ATTACKERS BY MERELY RAISING HIS ARMS AND RECITING AN ENCHANTED INCANTATION!

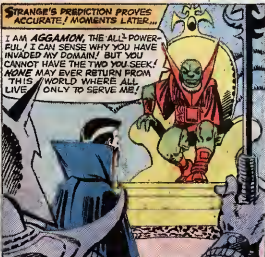
HOGBOOTH, PROTECT ME! TO MY AID, DORMAMMU AND THE MIGHTY VISHANTI!

THEY WILL NOT RUSH ME AGAIN! NEXT, THEY WILL LEAD ME TO THEIR OVERLORD!



STRANGE'S PREDICTION PROVES ACCURATE! MOMENTS LATER...

I AM AGGAMON, THE ALL-POWERFUL! I CAN SENSE WHY YOU HAVE INVADED MY DOMAIN! BUT YOU CANNOT HAVE THE TWO YOU SEEK! NONE MAY EVER RETURN FROM THIS WORLD WHERE ALL LIVE ONLY TO SERVE ME!



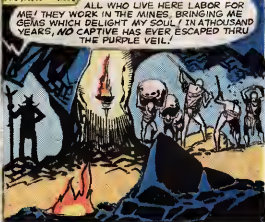
I AM NO HAPLESS CAPTIVE LIKE THE OTHERS, AGGAMON! I AM DR. STRANGE, MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC! MY POWER IS AS GREAT AS YOURS! YOU WOULD DO WELL NOT TO DEFEY ME!

YOU DARE ADDRESS ME THAT WAY??! FOOL! NOT FOR NOTHING AM I CALLED THE ALL-POWERFUL! I SHALL SHOW YOU MY MIGHT!



AT THE WAVE OF A HAND, AGGAMON CONJURES UP A MENTAL VISION, IN WHICH DR. STRANGE SEES HOW THE ALL-POWERFUL ONE RULES HIS WORLD WITH AN IRON HAND!

ALL WHO LIVE HERE LABOR FOR ME! THEY WORK IN THE MINES, BRINGING ME GEMS WHICH DELIGHT MY SOUL! IN THOUSAND YEARS, NO CAPTIVE HAS EVER ESCAPED THRU THE PURPLE VEIL!





BUT, I CAN SENSE YOUR POWER! YOU WILL BE THE MOST TREASURED CAPTIVE OF ALL! I DESIRE NOT TO WASTE MY TIME OR ENERGIES BATTLING YOU, SO I MAKE YOU AN OFFER!



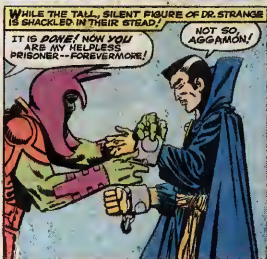
IF YOU TAKE THEIR PLACE AS MY CAPTIVE, I WILL INSTANTLY RETURN THEM TO THEIR NATURAL WORLD! WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER?

THEY ARE UNWORTHY OF SUCH A SACRIFICE! AND YET, I VOWED TO THE ANCIENT ONE THAT I WOULD AID ALL HUMANS! I MUST NOT BETRAY THAT TRUST!

I ACCEPT, AGGAMON!



AT THAT VERY INSTANT, A PURPLE MIST AGAIN APPEARS, AND BY MEANS OF A POWER UNKNOWN HERE ON EARTH, THE TWO HELPLESS HUMAN PAWNS ARE RETURNED FROM WHENCE THEY CAME!



WHILE THE TALL, SILENT FIGURE OF DR. STRANGE IS SHACKLED IN THEIR STEAD!

IT IS DONE! NOW YOU ARE MY HELPLESS PRISONER--FOREVERMORE!

NOT SO, AGGAMON!



I PROMISED TO TAKE THEIR PLACE AS A CAPTIVE! I MADE NO PROMISE TO REMAIN A CAPTIVE! NOW, THOUGH YOU HAVE ME SHACKLED, OUR BATTLE REALLY BEGINS!



WITH THOSE WORDS, THE AWESOME AMULET WHICH THE MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC WEARS AT HIS THROAT BEGINS TO GLOW WITH AN EERIE, SHIMMERING LIGHT...



--A LIGHT WHICH MELTS HIS CHAINS INTO NOTHINGNESS AS SOON AS IT TOUCHES THEM!

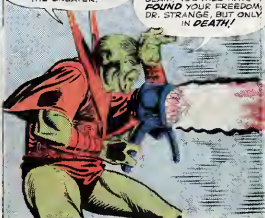
NOW, AGGAMON! YOU CALL YOURSELF ALL-POWERFUL! BUT WE SHALL TEST THE TRUTH OF THAT ARROGANT CLAIM!

AT ANOTHER GESTURE FROM DR. STRANGE, AGGAMON'S GUARDS, WHO POSSESS NO MAGIC POWERS OF THEMSELVES, ARE SCATTERED AS SEEDS BEFORE THE WIND...



NONE WILL AID YOU, AGGAMON! WE MUST BATTLE ALONE!

SO BE IT, MAN OF EARTH! THOUGH YOUR POWER IS GREAT, *MINE* IS STILL THE GREATER!



NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN WITHSTAND THE FORCE OF MY JEWELLED DEMOLISHER BEAM! YOU WILL HAVE *FOUND* YOUR FREEDOM, DR. STRANGE, BUT ONLY IN *DEATH*!

BUT THE FATAL BEAM NEVER REACHES THE MIGHTY MAN OF MYSTERY! FOR, IN MID-AIR, IT IS COUNTERED BY THE EQUALLY POWERFUL BEAM OF DR. STRANGE'S MAGIC AMULET!



THE LONG MINUTES TICK ON, AS DEMOLISHER AND AMULET CONTEND WITH EACH OTHER, WHILE AGGAMON AND DR. STRANGE GROW STEADILY WEAKER IN THE GRIM, SILENT BATTLE!



AS THE HOURS CREEP BY, BOTH ANTAGONISTS FEEL THE VERY LIFE ESSENCE DRAINING FROM THEIR BODIES, AS THEY REALIZE THAT THEY *BOTH* ARE DOOMED, UNLESS ONE SURRENDERS FIRST! FOR NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN LONG WITHSTAND THE MIND-STAGGERING PRESSURE TO WHICH THEY ARE SUBJECTED!

SURRENDER, YOU MORTAL FOOL! YOU HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE-- EXCEPT CERTAIN DEATH!

THE CHOICE IS *YOURS* AS WELL, AGGAMON! I DO NOT FEAR DEATH--LET US SEE IF YOU CAN FACE IT AS UNFLINCHINGLY AS I!!



SOMETHING IN DR. STRANGE'S DEemeanOR MAKES AGGAMON REALIZE HE IS SPEAKING THE TRUTH! AND THEN, FACED WITH THE PROSPECT OF CERTAIN DOOM, THE TYRANNICAL RULER MAKES HIS FINAL DECISION...

ENOUGH! YOU HAVE WON!

I MUST NOT DIE! I SURRENDER!



AND NOW, TO RETURN TO EARTH!

AGGAMON WAS STRONGER THAN I! HE COULD HAVE HELD OUT LONGER! BUT HIS OWN COWARDICE BETRAYED HIM!



YOU ARE FREE TO GO! LEAVE THIS PLACE! MAY I NEVER BEHOLD YOUR HATED COUNTEenance AGAIN!

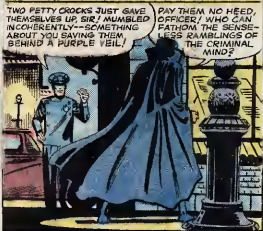
FIRST, I MUST MAKE SURE YOU CAN NO LONGER HOLD SO MANY LIVES IN BONDAGE! NOW THAT YOU ARE DEFEATED, MY AMULET CAN PROBE YOUR INNER SELF, WEAKENING YOU! ONLY BY SETTING YOUR CAPTIVES FREE, WILL YOU EVER FIND STRENGTH AGAIN! I HAVE SO ORDAINED!



LATER, A NEIGHBORHOOD POLICE OFFICER, RECOGNIZING DR. STRANGE, CALLS TO HIM...

TWO PETTY CROCKS JUST GAVE THEMSELVES UP, SIR! MUMBLED INCOHERENTLY—SOMETHING ABOUT YOU SAVING THEM BEHIND A PURPLE VEIL!

PAY THEM NO HEED, OFFICER! WHO CAN FATHOM THE SENSELESS RAMBLINGS OF THE CRIMINAL MIND?



I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, DOC! BUT ANYWAY, THEY SAID THEY WANT TO SERVE TIME, PAY THEIR DEBT TO SOCIETY, AND GO STRAIGHT! HOW ABOUT THAT?!!

THE WAYS OF FATE ARE INSCRUTIBLE INDEED! I FEARED I WAS RISKING MY LIFE IN VAIN AND YET, BECAUSE OF MY STRUGGLE TWO HUMANS HAVE BEEN PUT UPON THE RIGHT PATH!



I SHALL KEEP MY MANY-FACETED GEM! AND, IF EVER AGAIN I AM NEEDED BEYOND THE PURPLE VEIL, I SHALL BE READY!



MORE DR. STRANGE TALES IN THE NEXT GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS!

THE END